

# Norfolk Fire Division Annual Report 2020



## **NORFOLK FIRE DIVISION**

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## *NORFOLK FIRE DIVISION CALENDAR YEAR 2020*

The Fire Division ended another strong year of service to the citizens of Norfolk and the Rural Fire Protection District with no serious injury or death to our staff. Many accomplishments were achieved. Following is a list of some of the most notable activities that occurred in 2020:

- ◆ This past year (2020) resulted in the highest total emergency calls for service in the 137 year history of the department, in large part due to medical responses related to Covid-19. The 2,647 calls surpassed the previous high of 2,442 in 2018.
- ◆ During the past year, one full-time staff member left the fire division. Firefighter/Paramedic Joe Pedersen was hired to fill the vacancy on C Shift. Firefighter/Paramedic Bryce Hinrichs was deployed to the Middle East for one year for military duty. During his absence, Reserve Firefighter/EMT Chris Kneifl is filling the open spot on A Shift until he returns.
- ◆ The fire division and other fire departments in Madison County, in collaboration with county officials, continue the installation of individual property address signs in the county. They assist emergency responders in finding rural address locations more effectively and efficiently.
- ◆ Completion of the renovation of the old Permits & Codes area into the new training/meeting room and Emergency Operations Center is an asset utilized for various functions which will continue to expand.
- ◆ A committee made up of shift and administrative personnel has been formed to complete the design and specifications for a new ambulance. Expected bid securement and award is planned for the fall of 2021.
- ◆ The fire division, along with other city departments took delivery and placed into service a new emergency radio communication system. The bid was awarded by the Mayor & Council to Motorola for this project. Efforts continue to implement and perfect the new system that will be used by the city for many years to come.
- ◆ Staff continue to grind forward in the midst of the Pandemic. Significant challenges have been experienced over the past year, with many new policies and response criteria implemented. Continual screening and testing of staff, along with diligent use of personal protection equipment and extreme sanitation measures has resulted in not one single positive Covid-19 case to any of our staff from a work exposure transporting Covid-positive patients.

The Division looks forward to another successful year of service to the citizens of Norfolk and the Rural Fire District. A special thanks to both the Norfolk Mayor & City Council and Norfolk Rural Fire Board for their support in allowing us to carry out the goals and objectives of the division by providing the resources we need to complete the job in the best manner we possibly can. As always, please be well and stay safe.

Chief Cordes

# 2020

## OPERATIONS

2020 was another busy year resulting in our highest number of responses as well as handling day-to-day operations. The COVID-19 Pandemic brought new challenges for our responders. We responded to 2,293 rescue calls and 354 engine responses. This total was the highest call volume in the history of Norfolk Fire and Rescue. Calls for service included, but were not limited to, vehicle accidents, fires (structural and rangeland), hazardous material spills, medical calls and natural gas leaks.

### **SPECIALIZED TRAINING AND EVENTS IN 2020**

In January, annual training for ice rescue took place at Skyview Lake. Each shift spends time working on how to deal with incidents involving people or pets falling through the ice.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue continued to work to strengthen our capabilities when responding to various types of emergencies involving bodies of water. This past year (2) of our full time staff attended a train-the-trainer course so were able to host our own Swift Water Rescue class in Norfolk. As a result we were able to train thirteen of our full time staff through a 3 day course in June culminating with a training exercise on the Elkhorn River. We plan to host another course in 2021 to certify more of our staff and extend an offer to our mutual aid partners that would like to obtain this certification.



During 2020 all of the city's portable and mobile radios were replaced. This includes Public Works and Public Safety. In June, Norfolk Fire personnel attended an (8) course on the new Motorola Mobile and Handheld radio system. The radios are essential to response and communication with local and area responders.

In September, we were able to host a training house burn with the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division. This burn took place in southern Norfolk. Area departments participated in this burn, which included interior and exterior training evolutions. As part of the training, the Fire Marshal and a Fire Inspector conducted a demonstration showing how quickly floors will collapse in a structure fire.



Paramedics attended their 3-day annual refresher training session at Northeast Community College. Two sessions were offered, one in October and the other in November. The course is 24 hours classroom training, medics also complete an additional 48 hours (minimum) of in house training in order to maintain National Registry and State Certification. We currently have 34 Nationally Registered Paramedics and 6 in training. We also have nine personnel trained at the EMT-Basic level.



In summary as we look back on 2020, it brought about its own unique flavor. The Pandemic forced us to do business a little differently. Our responders rose to the challenge and managed to keep themselves safe while providing a high quality of care to the citizens of the City of Norfolk and its surrounding communities when needed.

# Norfolk Fire Division Annual Hazmat Report for 2020



Photo above from a natural gas leak. Picture shows Black Hills Energy checking for gas levels above the drop ceiling.

The Norfolk Fire Division responded to seven gas spills, seven gas leaks, 22 Carbon Monoxide Detector activations, and 26 odor investigations. Although COVID-19 prevented us from hosting our annual 40-80 hour Haz-Mat class, we were able to continue our normal training at the station. Grant funds allowed us to purchase two sets of gas clamps for crimping of gas lines in the event of a leaking gas line. The gas clamps are pictured below. We were also able to purchase a multiRAE lite gas monitor pictured below. These are used to detect different kinds of gas to include carbon monoxide and natural gas. We also bought replacement gaskets for our chlorine kits for controlling chlorine cylinder leaks.



## NORFOLK FIRE RESERVES

The Norfolk Fire Reserves continue to be an extremely important component of our Operations Bureau. Their commitment to training and response is of great value to the citizens of Norfolk. Their support aids the division meeting the increasing demands for service while maintaining operational costs. This team proved to be a very important component of Norfolk Fire and Rescue during the Pandemic in 2020. We leaned on our reserve staff to cover various hours on shift due to illness and significant weather events.



Our reserves are a diverse group with many different skill sets that come together for a common purpose to help serve and protect the citizens of Norfolk. The current group consists of a machinist, college students, law enforcement officers, an engineer, custodians, HVAC technicians, a childcare worker, a Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal, utility lineman, mechanics, a health inspector, and a fire suppression technician among other careers.

We currently have 32 reserves with years of experience ranging from one year to over 35 years. This year we added 4 fire reserves. They are training in required evolutions that includes live fire training and donning and doffing gear drills. Upon completion of all requirements, they will be sworn in as Norfolk Fire Reserves. This formal ceremony will occur at Norfolk Fire Station 1 attended by their peers. Supporting our full time staff, the reserves provide necessary resources for handling calls within the city and rural fire protection district. Emergency responses to fires, hazmat, back-to-back rescue calls, public relations events or labor-intensive technical rescues are examples of when the reserve staff is vital to our operation.

Training was certainly a challenge this year. Typically, we meet at least twice a month to train together for 3 hour sessions. Due to the Pandemic, we held training via video conference several times during the year. Prior to the quarantine, we were able to participate in confined space rescue training.

In addition to monthly training, our fire reserves attended annual Tornado Spotter training. In January, a Blackhawk helicopter landed at the Norfolk Airport and provided training on water rescue emergencies. The Resrves participated in vehicle extrication training with Hadar Fire and Rescue. Also in September, we hosted a training house burn with the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division in southern Norfolk. Area departments participated in this burn, along with many of our Reserves. The training included interior and exterior training evolutions.



Though 2020 has been a challenging year at Norfolk Fire, it has also been a very rewarding one. To see our full time and part time staff come together and overcome many adverse circumstances was inspiring. This team wants nothing more than to take care of each other and everyone that they serve. We look forward to what 2021 will bring our way.



# FIRE INSPECTIONS AND PREVENTION

Fire safety inspections were difficult to conduct due to the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020. Despite the restrictions, 450 inspections were conducted, including the inspection of 3 new banks and major remodels in the downtown area. Most of the inspections completed were to insure progress on new construction and license inspections for new premises. Our numbers are down but will soon pick up as the extensions of current certificate of occupancies for most state issued licenses will end.

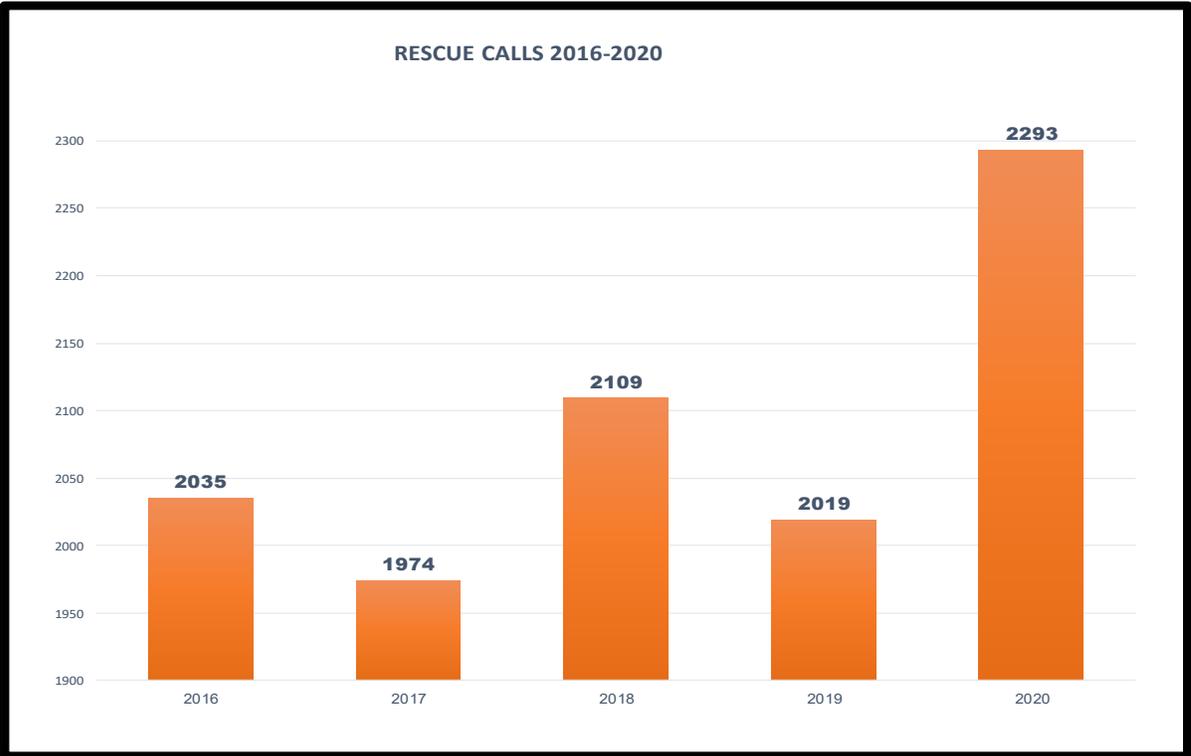
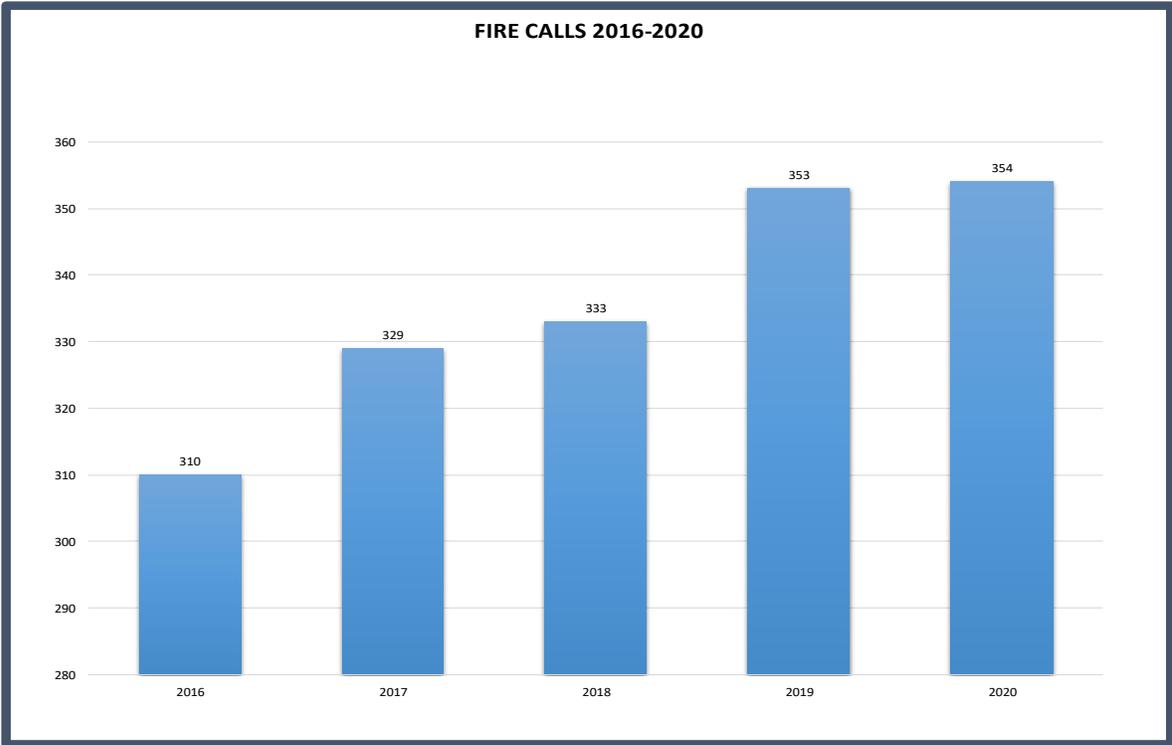
With the addition of three new firefighters, the firefighter/inspectors are now assigned to Station #2 full time. Frequently, three personnel are stationed at station #2 so the inspector can schedule inspections. Unfortunately, the pandemic curbed those inspections and preplans but will hopefully resume soon. Chris Lyon, our newest firefighter inspector passed his Fire Inspector I test and is now certified. With quarterly trainings, Chris will soon be in the community working his area north of Norfolk Avenue.

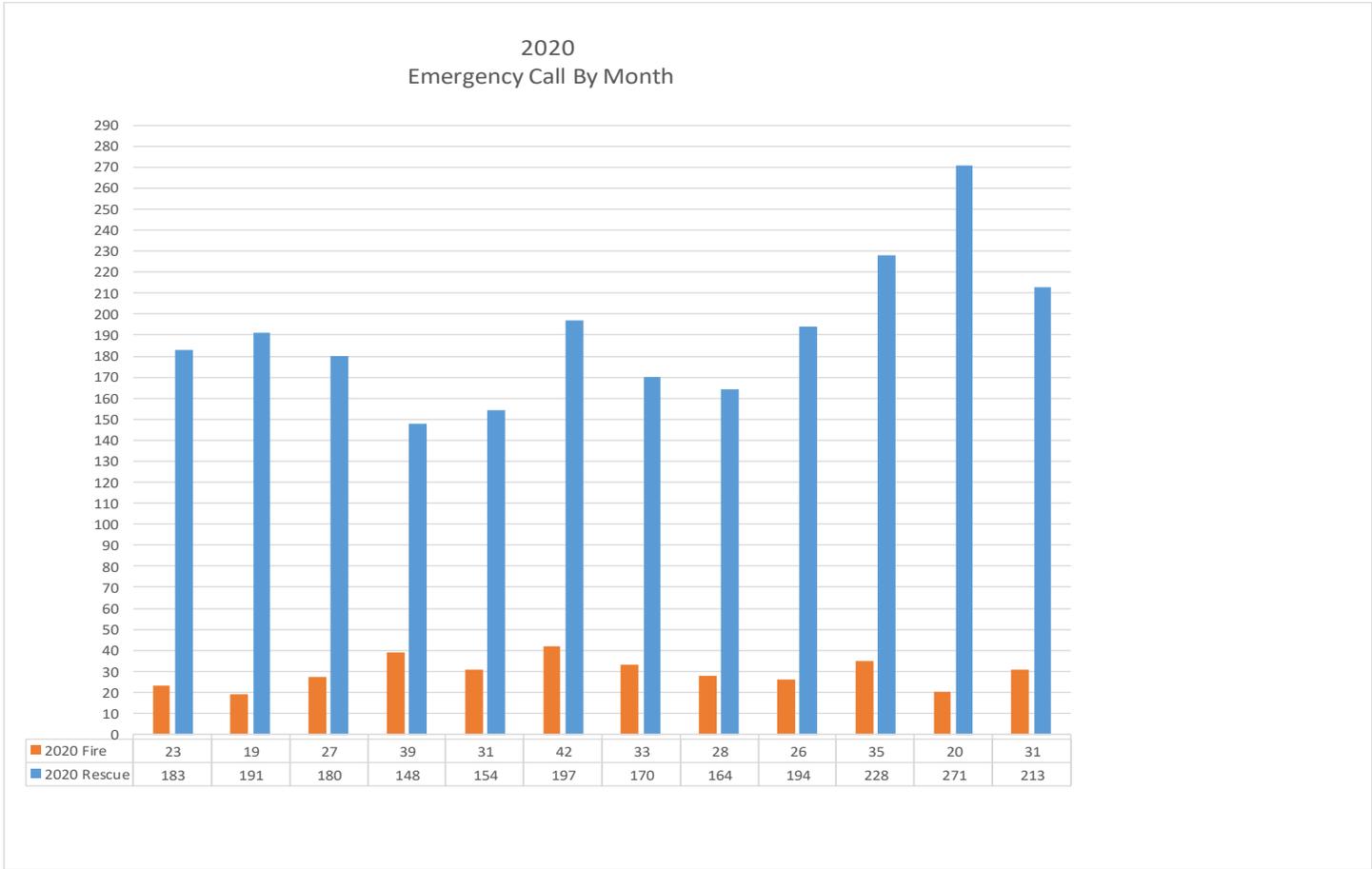
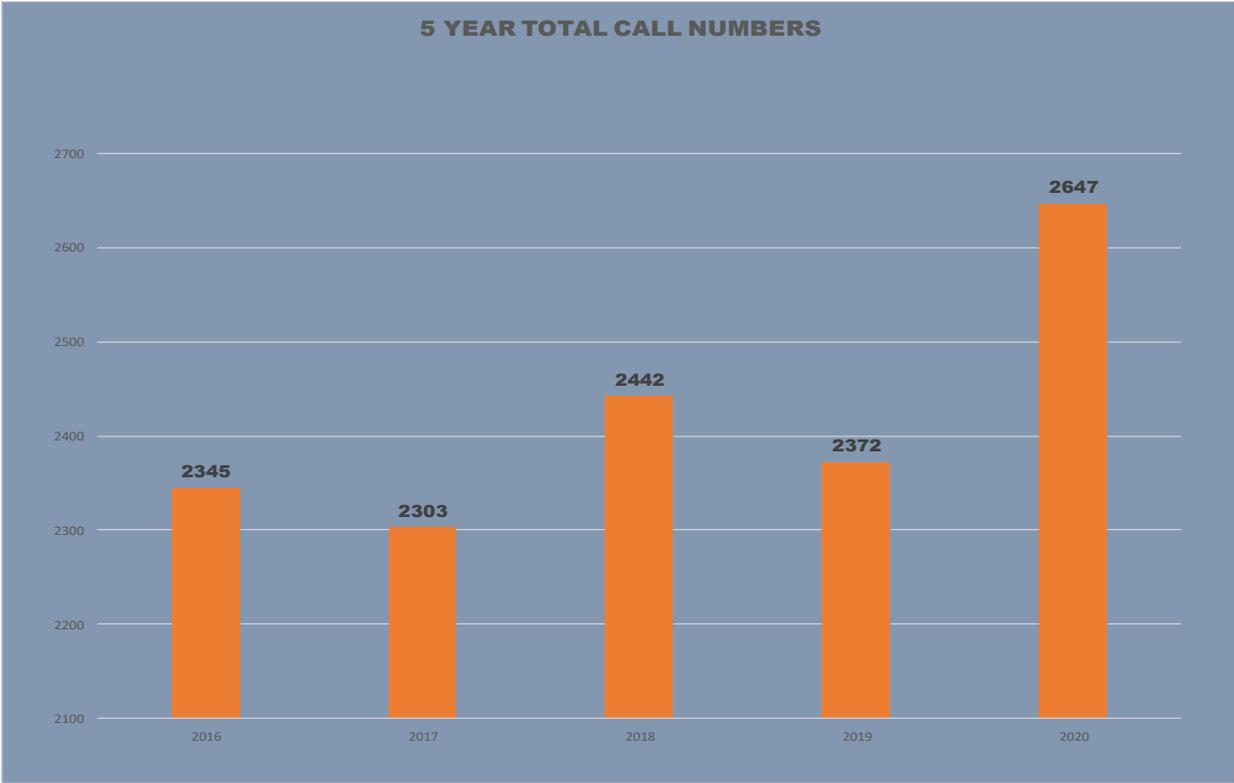
The fire division responded to 108 fire calls, with 13 structure fires damaging the contents and or structure. We responded to 14 other fires within structures, which were mostly cooking fires that were contained to the container on the stove with only smoke damage to the interior of the structure. Dollar loss due to fire was down: \$257,920 damage to the structures and \$206,705.00 to the contents of those structures. We were able to save 97% of the structures and lost just 8% of contents.

We saw a dramatic decrease in our interactions with the public due to the pandemic. We were still able to present our prevention message to 503 youth and adults. We interacted with a total of 586 citizens.. The remaining people were educated through the homeowners class offered through NeighborWorks and fire extinguisher training classes. The NeighborWorks courses are held every other month during the year. Most of these classes were conducted via Zoom. We would like to thank NeighborWorks for requesting us to participate in this program for the past 18 years and hope to continue helping them for many years to come.

We are always ready willing and able to work on preventing fires through education and public events, and conducting business inspections for fire code compliance.

# 5 YEAR BREAKDOWN OF FIRE AND RESCUE CALLS





## REGION 11 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Region 11 Emergency Management was challenged again this year with a new “disaster”. The region continued working with FEMA and NEMA on the reimbursement projects for the 2019 Flood and then the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic began. Efforts then focused on disbursement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), information and finally assisting in the organization of the first vaccination clinics. Norfolk Fire Division hosted COVID-19 clinics for the vaccination of EMS personnel throughout Region 11.



Norfolk Fire & Madison Fire EMS getting COVID-19 vaccinations from ELVHD.

Region 11 purchased a sandbagging machine attachment for a skid loader. It was built by Ag Specialties and will be a valuable asset to responders in Antelope, Madison & Pierce Counties during sandbagging efforts.



The National Weather Service held two severe weather training classes, one in Norfolk and one at Neligh in March. These were the final in person trainings available the remainder of the year due to the pandemic. Virtual/online classes, webinars, ZOOM meetings, etc., were proven invaluable in maintaining communication and keeping current on information throughout Nebraska and nationwide.

	<b>2019 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2121 Estimated</b>
<b>Demand:</b>			
<b>City Population</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>24,220</b>
<b>Rural District Population</b>	<b>4,950</b>	<b>4,950</b>	<b>4,950</b>
<b>Total Geographical Area Served</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>City Area</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Rural Area</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Mutual Aid Area</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>1,345</b>
<b>Workload:</b>			
<b>Total # of Responses</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>2,647</b>	<b>2,442</b>
<b>Emergency Medical Calls</b>	<b>2,019</b>	<b>2,293</b>	<b>2,109</b>
<b># of Patients Encountered</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>2,436</b>	<b>2,400</b>
<b>Fire Calls</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Structure Fires</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>% Contained to Room of Origin</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>% Contained to Structure of Origin</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Hazardous Material Calls</b>	<b>41 (includes CO calls)</b>	<b>51 (includes CO and gas line calls)</b>	<b>55</b>
<b># of Level 1 Call Backs</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>
<b># of Level 2 Call Backs</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>170</b>
<b># of Citizens Who Toured the Fire Station or attended classes</b>	<b>6388 Adults 1000 Youth</b>	<b>503 Total 64 Adults 439 Youth</b>	<b>700<sup>12</sup></b>

	<b>2019 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2021 Estimated</b>
<b>Public Contacted</b>	<b>4550</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Productivity:</b>			
<b>Total Training Hours</b>			
<b>Average Training Hours per Fire Fighter</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Feet of Hose Maintained</b>	<b>26,350</b>	<b>26,350</b>	<b>26,350</b>
<b># of Pumps Tested &amp; Maintained</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
<b># of Warning Sirens Tested &amp; Maintained</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b># of Preemption Devices Maintained</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>
<b># of SCBA Tested and Maintained</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>
<b># of Emergency Vehicles Maintained</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>
<b># of Defibrillators Maintained</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Effectiveness:</b>			
<b>Average Response Time per Call</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>4.15</b>
<b># of Incidents with 1<sup>st</sup> Arriving Units within 5 minutes (in city)</b>	<b>83.27%</b>	<b>79.96</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Valuation of Structures involved in Fire</b>	<b>\$4,938,700</b>	<b>\$9,053,677</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>
<b>Structural Dollar Amount Loss Due to Fire</b>	<b>\$932,100</b>	<b>\$257,920</b>	<b>\$280,000</b>
<b>Contents Dollar amount of loss due to fire</b>	<b>\$475,900</b>	<b>\$206,705</b>	<b>\$260,000</b>
<b>Average Years of Service of Employees</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>

